

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 32 and 61 for better form.

Please cancel claims 33, 35-38, 42, 43, 45, 46, 58, 59, 62 and 66-71 without prejudice.

Claims 27, 39, 57 and 60 were previously canceled without prejudice.

Pending claims 1-26, 28-32, 34, 40, 41, 44, 47-56, 61 and 63-65 follow.

1. (Previously Amended) A method for making a casingless sausage product comprising:
providing an emulsion, a first heating element comprising a conductive heating element,
and a second heating element,
heating the emulsion initially with the first heating element from a first temperature to an initial heating temperature;
heating the previously heated emulsion with the second heating element from the initial heating temperature to a second, higher heating temperature to cook the previously heated emulsion and to produce a casingless sausage;
cooling the casingless sausage to produce the casingless sausage product; and
cutting the casingless sausage product into individual sausages, cutting being performed after heating the emulsion with the first heating element and after heating the previously heated emulsion with the second heating element.
2. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, providing the emulsion further comprising providing an emulsion having meat.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, providing the first heating element further comprising providing a heat exchanger.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, heating the emulsion with the first heating element further comprising heating the emulsion to the initial heating temperature from the first temperature of about 40°F.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, heating the emulsion with the first heating element further comprising heating the emulsion to an initial heating temperature that is less than about 120°F.
6. (Original) The method of claim 5, heating the emulsion with the first heating element further comprising heating the emulsion to an initial heating temperature from about 70°F to about 100°F.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, heating the emulsion with the first heating element further comprising heating the emulsion for about 5 seconds to about 30 seconds.
8. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, heating the previously heated emulsion further comprising heating the previously heated emulsion with a rapid heating element.
9. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 8, heating the previously heated emulsion with a rapid heating element further comprising heating the previously heated emulsion paste with a microwave source.
10. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 8, heating the previously heated emulsion with a rapid heating element further comprising heating the previously heated emulsion with radio frequency (RF) source.
11. (Original) The method of claim 1, heating the previously heated emulsion further comprising heating the previously heated emulsion to the second heating temperature that is from about 130°F to about 170°F.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, heating the previously heated emulsion to the second heating temperature with the second heating element further comprising heating the previously heated emulsion for about 2 to about 60 seconds.
13. (Original) The method of claim 1, cooling the casingless sausage further comprising passing the casingless sausage through a chiller after exiting the second heating element.
14. (Original) The method of claim 13, passing the casingless sausage through the chiller further comprising passing the casingless sausage under a chilled brine.
15. (Original) The method of claim 1, cooling the casingless sausage further comprising cooling the casingless sausage from the second heating temperature to a cooling temperature of about 85°F to about 35°F.
16. (Original) The method of claim 15, cooling the casingless sausage further comprising cooling the casingless sausage to a cooling temperature of about 50°F.
17. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising exposing the casingless sausage to an ambient condition prior to cooling.
18. (Original) The method of claim 17, exposing the casingless sausage to an ambient condition further comprising exposing the casingless sausage to an ambient condition for about 10 to about 120 seconds.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising reducing a size of a conduit that carries the emulsion to the first heating element.
20. (Original) The method of claim 19, reducing the size of the conduit further comprising reducing a diameter of a tube from about 4" to about 1".
21. (Original) The method of claim 20, the emulsion entering a larger end of the tube at about 200 lb/hour.
22. (Original) The method of claim 20, the emulsion exiting a reduced end of the tube at about 180 lb/hour.
23. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising reducing a size of a conduit that carries the previously heated emulsion from the first heating element to the second heating element.
24. (Original) The method of claim 23, reducing the size of the conduit further comprising reducing a diameter of a tube from about 1" to about 0.5"
25. (Original) The method of claim 24, the emulsion entering the larger end of the tube at about 200 lb/hour.
26. (Original) The method of claim 24, the emulsion exiting the reduced end of the tube at about 10 to about 40 ft/min.

27. (Canceled).

28. (Previously Amended) The method of claim 1, cutting the casingless sausage product further comprising cutting the casingless sausage product into lengths of about 1" to about 6".

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, the individual sausages having a diameter from about .6" to about 1.2".

30. (Original) The method of claim 1, prior to cooling, further comprising directing the casingless sausage through an insulative member.

31. (Original) The method of claim 1, prior to cooling, further comprising rinsing the casingless sausage.

32. (Currently Amended) A system for making a casingless sausage product from an emulsion comprising:

a first heating element, the first heating element comprising a conductive heating element;

a second heating element;

a chiller; and

a cutter,

the emulsion being initially heated with the first heating element from a first temperature to an initial heating temperature, then heated again from the initial heating temperature to a second, higher heating temperature with the second heating element to form a casingless sausage, the chiller producing the casingless sausage product from the casingless sausage from the second heating element, the cutter forming individual sausages from the casingless sausage product after the initial heating to the first temperature and the additional heating to the second temperature.

33. (Canceled).

34. (Original) The system of claim 32, the first heating element comprising a heat exchanger.

35. (Canceled).

36. (Canceled).

37. (Canceled).

38. (Canceled).

39. (Canceled).

40. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 32, the second heating element comprising a microwave source.

41. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 32, the second heating element comprising a radio frequency (RF) source.

42. (Canceled).

43. (Canceled).

44. (Original) The system of claim 32, the chiller applying chilled brine onto the casingless sausage.

45. (Canceled).

46. (Canceled).

47. (Original) The system of claim 32, the casingless sausage being exposed to an ambient condition prior to entering the chiller.

48. (Original) The system of claim 32, further comprising a pump that provides the emulsion to the first heating element.

49. (Original) The system of claim 32, further comprising a reducing element that reduces a size of a conduit carrying the emulsion from the pump to the first heating element.

50. (Original) The system of claim 49, the conduit comprising a tube, a diameter of the tube being reduced from about 4" to about 1" by the first reducing element.

51. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 50, the tube being configured so that the emulsion enters the larger end of the tube at about 200 lb/hour.

52. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 50, the tube being configured so that the emulsion exits the reduced end of the tube at about 10 ft/min to about 40 ft/min.

53. (Original) The system of claim 32, further comprising a reducing element that reduces a size of a conduit that carries the previously heated emulsion from the first heating element to the second heating element.

54. (Original) The system of claim 53, the conduit comprising a tube, a diameter of the tube being reduced from about 1" to about 0.5"

55. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 54, the tube being configured so that the previously heated emulsion enters the larger end of the tube at about 200 lb/hour.

56. (Previously Amended) The system of claim 55, the tube being configured so that the previously heated emulsion exits the reduced end of the tube at about 19 ft/min to about 21 ft/min.

57. (Canceled).

58. (Canceled).

59. (Canceled).

60. (Canceled).

61. (Currently Amended) A system for making a casingless sausage product from an emulsion comprising:

a first heating element, the first heating element comprising a direct heating element;

a second heating element;

a chiller; and

a cutter,

the emulsion being initially heated with the first heating element from a first temperature to an initial heating temperature, then heated again from the initial heating temperature to a second, higher heating temperature with the second heating element to form a casingless sausage, the chiller producing the casingless sausage product from the casingless sausage from the second heating element, the cutter forming individual sausages from the casingless sausage product after the initial heating to the first temperature and the additional heating to the second temperature.

62. (Canceled).

63. (Previously Added) The method of claim 1, heating the emulsion initially with the first heating element resulting in the emulsion being heated but not coagulated.

64. (Previously Added) The method of claim 1, heating the emulsion initially with the first heating element resulting in the emulsion being initially heated and partially coagulated, but not completely coagulated.

65. (Previously Added) The method of claim 1, the previously heated emulsion being completely coagulated during heating with the second heating element to produce the casingless sausage.

66. (Canceled).

67. (Canceled).

68. (Canceled).

69. (Canceled).

70. (Canceled).

71. (Canceled).